Liberia ... UNIVERSITY

"The Hour for Africa."

AN ADDRESS

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BY

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ADDRESS.

Things sound as if the morning hour for Africa must have struck. The last of the six continents to claim the attention of the world, who can be sure she may not yet, as the last child of Jesse, be appointed by Providence to a place of principal eminence? Her calling is at a propitious period of human history. Though denominated the dark continent, her set time strikes in the high day of universal light, when the prophecy is being fulfilled: "the darkness shall flee away." Other continents have been carved and shaped into the similitudes of palaces for the people with clumsy and cruel weapons of civilization: with dull and inadequate agencies for education and under bigoted and blundering leadership in religion.

Would the governments of Darius and Alexander have perished if knowledge had been diffused so that politics had been understood by the people as well as by the archon; and religion by the worshipper as well as by the priest?

Might not Rome have still been stable on her seven hills of Empire, had she but felt the thrill of disenthralling individualism, which came forth in convulsions at the close of the eighteenth century, but is the normal life of the nineteenth?

Do the agonizing nations of Northern Europe now indicate anything more clearly than this, that our era means to end its work by cutting the clinch from the fetter, and flinging into the black abyss of the forever the last shackle of human bondage? Because the world moves, mankind has come much nearer than ever to know how deep were the words of the Lord: "The son of man came to seek and save that which was lost." Naturalism provides a physician for the whole; Biblical civilization, for them that are sick.

Old times and nations did not imitate your parental care and provide first for the impotent, ignorant and poor. They debated and declared the divine right of Kings; the lofty claims of feudal lords; and the inherent eminence assured by color of blood, independent of character. Ancestral times were reluctant to learn that a State cannot imitate an acrobat and stand upon its head. Later times have learned it. And now, whither have the absolute monarchies of earth departed? How limited are the limits of monarchies that yet remain? And how their constantly shrinking prerogatives remind us of the cage of story. Built so that the turn of crank each morning made its sides close and shut out ray after ray of day, until at last the inmate, was chrushed by its iron embrace. And he who designed and built it suffered death by it. So those old Constitutions and States, which potentates composed

to press the life out of the common people, for the pleasure and profit of fortune's favorites, are closing on their builders, as the shrinking cage; until there is hardly a royal house that does not suffer a continual ache of apprehension for the future of crowned heads. Up to this propitious present where will we find a continent or country whose beginnings of civilization were not hampered by the restrictions of popular rights? This accounts for empires perishing, and for the slow progress made by such as survive.

Consider the condition of England at the hour of the Norman conquest, and compare her with Great Britain now; and how very slowly she has moved during those eight centuries! England would not have been so long in rising from the bogs and barbarism of her beginning to become, as she is, the first of Christian Kingdoms, if Alfred the Great had begun his work at the same time that you planted a Colony on the shores of Africa!

But three and three quarter centuries have a little more than elapsed since white men commenced to fashion our national fabric from the American forests. Only two hundred and sixty Decembers have sheeted Plymouth Rock with ice since the pious and intrepid Puritans sowed the seeds of republican liberty along the New England coast. But a hundred and four times, the fourth of July's rejoicings have reverberated over our heads as an independent people. For ninety and two years only we have slept under the canopy of a national Constitution. And behold how much further we have advanced in less than four centuries, than England did in six.

And yet our beginnings were under heavy disabilities. What sluggish shipss ailed the seas? What tardy communications circulated ideas? What loitering messengers imparted intelligence? How narrow were the notions of natural laws! How dull was the appetite for progress in art! Science was an embryo. Religion largely a superstition. Commerce a name. Civilization rude. Culture crude. International comity unknown. China was a sealed munition; Japan a myth; England an enemy and all Europe a fiercely contested battlefield. Therefore, there is no other ground of national boasting so broad and safe as this; that we have done as well as we have, considering the hindrances at the outset.

During these dolorous ages Africa, as a diamond in the mine, has been hid in the dark waiting for the digger, the lapidary and the day when she may dazzle and decorate the world. Her time arrives when the noise of war is scarcely heard under the sun; when Kings and Captains have loosed their clutch of spears and swords to take up plows and pens; when for Councils of War we select Commissions of arbitration; when the haughtiest power cannot abuse its subjects, any more than a heartless driver can the dumb brute, without having such protests and penalties imposed as Austria and Turkey have recently heard and heeded. The hour for Africa is when nations are not clamorous for territorial

conquest, but rich enough to offer unlimited wealth for investment and for her development: and religious enough to give aid to those who will carry her the best schools and the most Bibles; build the fewest confessionals; bind her conscience the least and exalt her social life the most.

When the plans and impulses of Providence prompted the opening of North America—except a few scattered fishermen who came down from the north not to stay—there were but two great nations that could take time from war at home to man expeditions and plant colonies in this new country. To day the entire world nearly looks through the open gates of Janus in the only one direction that remains to invite the explorer; and is eager to follow him. Ships have been stripped of lazy sail and filled with impatient steam. Monrovia is nearer New York than Pittsburg was when your Society elected its first President. At thirty or forty different points ambitious parties are seeking entrance to the unknown secrets of Africa; and may be we will hold our breath when they bring back full reports, by and by. They are clothed with peace; weapened with implements of the best civilization; aflame with the loftiest aspiration and devoted to the extension of that religion which, alone has a heaven-born right to reign. Theodolites and spades are ready to alter footpaths into railroads, on which engines will ultimately each drag hundreds of tons where but a few stone-weight have been loaded on brutes and slaves' backs from the beginning. The desert of Sahara, from side to side, is soon to be seeded with the roses of industry which railroads are sure to sow. And the Niger is to cradle keels that will carry some such promise and potency for the Western side of the Continent, as the Nile did for the little nook of Egypt when it bore Moses in the basket of bulrushes.

For this, prosperous France appropriates this year six millions of francs. Germany unites the purse of her Parliament with the resources of her geographical societies, and commissions six expeditions to go and see this thing which has come to pass, and bring her word again. Though trembling under the burdens of taxation and weary with scheming, to sustain her standing as a solvent nation, Italy is unable to hold off her hands from knocking for admission to Africa. Spain, never indifferent to her neighbor beyond the narrows of Gibraltar, now wakes to unwonted energy; and enters eagerly into the competition with others, if haply she may on the eastern side sieze the pearl of great price. Of all names that are taken up tenderly in our times none receives more reverent regard than that of David Livingstone: the factory boy of Blantyre, who became for ever illustrious by hiding himself in the bosom of the dark continent—as a lamp in a lantern—thereby becoming its light, and as well making it luminous to all who look at it.

The intrepid Stanley is as renowned as was a great warrior of old; simply because he has carried the torch of a Christian civilization, and the letters which spell liberty further than any white man into the interior and up to Mtesa's Court! Surely things sound as if the morning hour for

Africa has struck.

In this consort of nations, closing round her coasts,—their minds on her mines of precious ores; eyes on her elephants and ivory; snuffing her spice groves and peering into the mouths of her waters to see where her rivers of palm oil rise, what attitude and anxiety best becomes us as a nation? Not the same as is seemly for others. No other nation has, as we have, crushed and milled her sons into riches, as the canes of the sugar fields are worked. No other nation has been so ignorant and rapacious as ours in robbing this subject race of its blood, and rolling it up as the make weight of cotton bales, and chiefest wealth and sign of boasted social supremacy of the proudest section of the body politic. Therefore, by no rule of righteousness can we seek first the prizes of commerce which rightfully allure other lands. Or if we do, and do obtain them, I fear the curse of ill-gotten pain will accumulate as between us and these our ebony brothers of one blood.

It is time for us to begin to serve Africa; to redress unutterable wrongs by "works meet for repentance." The eternal throne of justice may express its full satisfaction with African slave-holding America when we do more than God's compulsory Providence in war compelled us to do—cut the shackle and set the black man free. When we do more than put into the hands of benighted ignorance a ballot, to make the black man a voter in form, but a victim of all political villainy in fact. When we do even more than open public schools and university courses for his education.

Story books, that we read in boyhood, had thrilling tales of Indians stealing children from families of white people on the frontier. The agonies of parental sufferings! how vividly they are painted! The perils of the pure maiden as a prisoner in the wigwam of wicked men; and the months and years of anguish that intervene before word is brought home how the lost child is, we can easily recall! Suppose it were our child, and all we heard was that her captors had cut the cords from her wrists; had agreed not to degrade her character any deeper by unspeakable lawlessness; and had opened a school in which her offspring of shame might see what they could do to recover themselves.

Could our indignation acquit even an aboriginee who would consider this a decent travesty of justice! Give me back my child, is the choking cry of abused parental love.

And if Africa is too far off for our ears to catch her cry: or if ignorance and oppression have so deadened her best sensibility that she has ceased to know how shamefully she has suffered in the robbery and commerce of her children, we believe heaven hears for her, and holds the book of account.

And if so, our bounden duty is to undertake, more ernestly than ever for Africa both here and abroad, all enterprises that promise to redress her wrongs and to return her offspring, who may have a hunger for home, to the land of their fathers. Therefore it goes without say-

ing, that those imposing plans of the American Board to plant the agencies and emblems of salvation at Bihe deserve the sympathy and supplication of every American citizen. They go not for gain, but the good of souls, the glory of God and the illumination of the dark land. So does the Mendi Mission, which now, under our American Missionary Association, after thirty years of feeble success and fearful sacrifice of white missionaries, is setting out to bring salvation to that part of Africa through the service of her own sons.

But passing these and other agencies with only a word of benediction, we are now to consider, whether this African Colonization Society ought not still to have a share of sympathy and a swelling measure of substantial support in doing a part of this work.

It ought; considering its patient continuance in well doing up to this present. At a meeting held in Park St. church, Boston, about a year ago, in the interests of your Society, Rev. Joseph Cook shocked the audience into intense attention by this opening sentence: "Liberia is bankrupt!" He instantly relieved our solicitude by saying; "These were the words of an opponent of African Colonization which I heard while coming down to the church."

It was not our Boston orator who declared "Liberia is bankrupt." And it may not have been the best informed from whom he took his oratorical fire-cracker.

The outs, if they are of a critical mind, have every advantage over the ins that endeavor to promote an enterprise. Because it is so much easier to criticise than to construct; easier to give reasons for refusing favor than to establish truth by argument and effort.

Of those who have least faith in African Colonization and least fervor in forwarding your endeavors, it may not be uncharitable to guess, the lack is due largely to the same cause which, we read, gave God such grief in the days of the prophets; "Israel doth not know; my people do not consider." But, remembering how much there is to know and do in our day, we need not feel aggrieved if all good men are not enlisted in every excellent movement.

It does not disturb the faith we have in the temperance reform that some really pious people are imprudent enough to tipple. Nor ought it to influence any friend of African Colonization unfavorably to hear of ardent philanthropists who prefer another way of paying our debts. It weighs nothing against this Society's work, that we know, if even the debased race, for whose welfare it has so patiently worked, are not entirely enthusiastic in their praise of it. That signifies nothing; because their intelligence is not yet so broad and clear but that they are in dread of the very uncertain white man who from the time he first stole their forefathers and enslaved them has shown an ingenuity in mistreating men of their color. Neither do any short comings of complete success in the free colony and Republic of Liberia settle the question against your eloquent appeal for enlarged support. Nations do not grow as Jonah's

gourd—unless to wither as quick. It was 1821 before a permanent beginning of the Republic of Liberia was recorded. Since then only sixty years have passed. Sixty years with sixty wings on every minute of the time, and how swiftly the years do fly.

Take account of any other nation that started on so desolate a site, on such stinted supplies, in the teeth of such hostilities, and see how much more any one of them achieved in their first sixty years. What was there to show on these shores within sixty years from the coming of Columbus? Or wait six years after the Spanish keel had cut a track across the sea, when the first English colony of 300, under Sabastian Cabot, arrived, and then count forward sixty years, and compare the results with those of Liberia. Quite seventy years elapsed before there was so much as a permanent colony planted north of the gulf of Mexico. True the world was younger then than now, and equal progress could not be expected. But we may be more generous, and not begin to inquire of the American colonies for a full century after Cabot's company came. And yet starting thus, in 1598, we shall need to wait two weary centuries more before those colonies are seamed and cemented under a Constitution of States.

So that if the short-comings of African Colonization were even more real than they are now imaginary, the propriety of supporting it does not deserve a snap judgment against it.

When reading recently more carefully than before the significant facts of the Society's history, I paused at this; it was in the ship "Elizabeth" your first eighty immigrants were carried to Africa. We recal another Elizabeth who bore a forerunner of her race and the pioneer of a holy dispensation. Her child endured many a year of ascetic sacrifice and severe labors in the wilderness of Judea merely to "prepare the way of the Lord." He organized nothing. He established nothing. This son of the New Testament Elizabeth was satisfied if he might be but "the voice" of the better things to come. And if the results of the voyage of that Elizabeth of yours, in all the years since she touched at Sherbro Island had been but to prepare the way of the people who are yet to follow, and to secure the blessings that Liberia may yet bestow on Africa, we ought to say of the Society; "Well done good and faithful servant!"

A second reason why the African Colonization Society ought to survive and be strengthened is, that better than any other it is now equipped to aid these restless sons of Africa to return home.

With some it is a first question whether they are restless, and do ask to r turn, The street says, no. Statistics say, yes? And of the two, statistics may be taken as the more sober and reliable witness. But I have not met a more adverse view of this work than comes from those who quote the street. They think the fundamental idea of the Society is fallacious: because the colored people do not desire aid to return and it is at variance with the truth to say they do! May I not safely make

this answer on your behalf? If they do not, then they need not.

They are not to be coerced nor cheated into changing countries. This Society has no kidnappers roaming the South. No cunning representations of yours are deceiving the colored population of the Carolinas. No oily-lipped agent in Florida or Louisiana, similar to those who serve the Chinese companies of California in Asia, or the Mormon monstrosity in Northern Europe are securing you emigrants. You do not flash the south with posters promising these poor people they will find Liberia the Eldorado where they can pick up riches as stones in the street. That is the way they used to draw emigrants from Ireland,—more's the pity. But as far as the east is from the west is any measure of yours from that bold operating of modern mining companies, which capitalizes a shadow at millions, on paper, and puts the shares on the market at a sixpence. And so, it has but little appearance of undue influence, where I read in "*Information about going to Liberia* that each emigrant on his arrival is given only a town lot, or ten acres of land." For if he remains in America there are one hundred and sixty acres open to his occupancy. When it is asked: "How can I make a living in Africa;" the answer, as printed, is not particularly enticing to a people who are naturally tired. It says: "In the same way that you would make one anywhere else; that is by industry and economy."

This is not even so inviting as the inducement which an Irish laborer, lately landed in America, offered to friends in the old country to follow him here. I have nothing to do, wrote he, but lug loads of brick to the top of the building, and another man does all the work. Emigrants to Liberia learn before leaving home that the sentence of Heaven stands in Africa as here: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." But notwithstanding the ignorance there is among the colored people of the opportunity presented to them to obtain an independence, a self-control, a social respect, and political influence, which for generations to come but few of their race can reach by remaining in America; and notwithstanding the slight inducements that are offered them in passage and in property, this conservative Society asserts, that of its knowledge there are half a million of the people of color who are agitating the question of emigration to Liberia. If so it would seem befitting that this first friend of Western Africa's civilization should be enabled to aid this restless offspring of the early slaves. Except the African, there is no race represented in our heterogeneous population whose offspring might not be able without any outside aid to emigrate wherever they would—over all the earth, provided their fathers had used their opportunities and economized their profits. But it has been otherwise with the African race. Of the millions of them who were slaves, not one has a son over eighteen years of age who was not born with the brand of bondage on his brow and a fetter on his foot, unfitting him to easily find his way beyond the base estate in which his ancestors have suffered for centuries. And it agrees with the best impulses and deep-

est principles of justice that we owe it to every son of those sires who lived and died in servitude, to put it within their power to go and take up a residence wherever they desire.

Do some of them yearn for that, to them, most of all sacred state, the fat lands of Kansas? Then we would throw open every door, despite any specious argument which former owners urge against losing them from the cotton fields. And more, as Joseph put money into the bag of his brethren it would be but scant charity if every emigrant to that land should have given him as good a send off as you promise to those who start for Liberia. So, too our God speed would go with all who ask the way to South Africa, or to the rising-sun-side of their fatherland, "with their faces thitherward." But multitudes are looking to Western Africa: and when it is inquired who is in a position to best promote their going there does not appear any ground to debate that you are. Whether thinking of the wisdom of the illustrious men who have managed this Society—and before the array of their names the spirit of reverence spontaneously bows.—or whether we reckon the superior advantages of climate and geography of your young Republic or if we note the numerous pointings of Divine Providence which prophecy a brilliant future for Liberia, it does look unreasonable and is due to some ignorance that all well wishers of colored people are not friends of African Colonization.

And this leads me to the next reason why the Society ought to succeed. Third; The American Republic owes it to her only child, the Republic in Africa, that she shall receive such supplies as will insure her stability and preserve her purity.

We say things sound as if the morning hour for Africa has struck. But there are hours before the third. We do not forget that for a hundred and fifty years fearless and faithful followers of Christ, have been laboring to lift South Africa into the light of Christian civilization. He reads little of the world's heroes who knows not George Schmidt, the pioneer of African missions; nor of that illustrious scholar, soldier and saint, Vanderkemp, who gave his great heart and life for Kaffirs and Hottentots, nor yet of Robert Moffat, whose glory-crowned grey-head was cynosure at the Mildmay Missionary Conference in 1879.; and who owed the honors he received, and is to receive unto and after death to the unmatched services and sacrifices he has given to missions in South Africa. It is not forgotten that Cape Colony gives a brighter view of the continent than Victoria Nyanza, Bornu, or the upper Niger. That where George Schmidt planted his "handful of corn" mission nearly two hundred thousand Christians have come to the Cross, and established the faith in South Africa.

But none of the beginnings in that region belong to us. To Great Britain and the Dutch Boers belong the Cape, the Orange River Free State: and the Transvaal Republic. And as posterity will hold them responsible for their good or evil influence over the poor natives, so it

must be with us up the coast, where we are trying the experiment of a Republic, built on a pattern received by us in the holy Mount Calvary. Liberia is far from home, and hard pressed by heathen populations that would enthral her liberty by exhibiting to her ruling spirits the advantages of oppression. The child is separated by wide seas from this parental atmosphere that has, as its vital element of intelligent enterprise and independence, the prayers and piety, traditions and tendencies which arise as a fountain under the Christian Church and circulate through all the channels of social, commercial, literary and political life.

Remembering Liberia's proximity to populous and profoundly debased neighborhoods, it is worthy of our wonder that her skirts haven ot been already bemired and her spirit bewitched—as Israel of old was wont to be by the encroaching heathen.

To surely prevent this, under that propitious Providence which has watched all your ships sail safe from shore to shore, let picked emigrants from our schools and Universities, and the better classes of colored citizens go out: in numbers corresponding at least with that constant inflow of country life which keeps our own cities supplied with their reviving element, and the young Republic will swell but never stagnate, and will age but not lose its youth.

Its present population of three quarters of a million is not sufficent to pierce the masses of moral corruption without becoming contaminated itself. And the best addition will be well bred brothers of their own blood who carry from home our highest and holiest ideas of education and religion to repeatedly refresh their aspirations and piety.

And as it is your aim to accomplish just this, I think the effort ought to succeed: and for a final fourth reason.

To afford a reasonable argument why other attempts to save Africa ought to be aided. At the outset of this enterprise the end in view stopped with your good will to free people of color in this country. Now all are politically free: and the emphasis of your endeavor rests not on narrower but on broader grounds. Then it was for the benefit of some Africans. Now it is for all Africans and all Africa. But if Liberia is not made a success after what has been given to it of the head and heart of many of the purest philanthropists which this century has produced, what can be hoped for on the more hostile Eastern Coast, or at Mtesa's court? Neither the East nor the interior offer greater facilities of approach; nor a kindlier reception to the new comer. Their airs are not so salubrious, nor soil more prolific, nor population more promising subjects of Christian civilizations.

So that when Liberia shall come to disappoint the expectations of its founders and friends, the wisdom of expending life and treasure on any further attempt to dissipate the darkness from the Transvaal to the Albert Nyanza will be pointedly questioned by practical men.

It is not because I have consented to say something on this occasion, that the claims of this work draw my warmest words of approval. I am

not subsidized to utter an endorsement, by a desire to receive your approval, who have placed me here. Any want of interest in me during the past has been due to ignorance and misapprehension; and to the fact, that only in the last few years have the claims of the dark continent and of the colored people pressed to the front of philanthropic questions.

Even now no violent rapture sweeps me from the place of reason. No utopian dream of drawing everybody into admiration of African Colonization fill my mind. But by as much as I gather together the facts of history, motives of action, and achievements of good which are already recorded of your attempt to plant a land of the free and a home for the black in Liberia, by so much does it appear impossible that divine Providence will allow you to want any good thing.

Around the entire rim of that great continent beacons have been lighted and beginnings made. But no where is the light so prismatically pure, containing so many of the colors that blend to make the white beam, as that which shines off the shores of Liberia. I would it were only by a flight of fancy, that I see there the one strong-hold of our holy religion; and the one place where the son of man when He cometh will find faith on the earth. Naturally a more religious race than any; and so easily captivated by the name of Christ that colored people never yield to anything so cordially as to the most Biblical religion, it may be that they in their own saved country may yet become the chiefest custodians of its sacraments, services and traditions. That if philosophizing Europe, and fashionable America, and idolatrous Asia shall ever have lost themselves in a turmoil of debate, in a whirl of imitations, or laid down in a lethargy of indifference--as Asia is fast doing, Africa may be holding fast the faith once delivered to the saints.

A distinguished and venerable bishop of the A. M. E. Church was preaching in my hearing at Saratoga. His topic was; the trials and triumphs of Christianity. Selecting many striking examples in old Testament times where the powers of evil tried but failed to destroy the Church of God, he came to the advent of Christ. Now, said the preacher, Satan and his forces were fired with a fierce purpose; they would not be foiled in this attempt. This is the son, they said; come let us kill him that the inheritance may be ours.

And so all the aids of the adversary combined and engaged Herod to kill the child Jesus. But when the Lord saw how strong they were, and He had no place of safety for his son outside of Egypt; He just ordered Joseph to take the young child and its mother and go down among the colored people: and stay until He brought him word again. "As it is written out of Egypt have I called my son." It had been known and written by inspiration long before it happened that there would come a time when the only safe place for the infant Christ would be down among the colored people. Is there any other Scripture in His mind, that reads; the time will come when the cause of Chirst will have no place of perfect acceptance and safety except in Africa, among the colored people?